

# Megiddo Message



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"I WILL GO TO THE KING"

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Megiddo means

"a place of troops,"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.

"a place of God."

—Young's Analytical Concordance.

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Always, supremacy there has been the envy of the world, and the prevailing nation has guarded it with a jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, God is in this place with a band of troops. Soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

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The pages of this book also unfold the purpose of our organization and the scope of our work, both past and present, for the dissemination of Truth. If you cherish the desire to know more about the Mission you may get some of this information through the printed page. A comprehensive synopsis of our beliefs is contained in the Appendix.

Price 40 cents postpaid.



## "In the Heart of the Christian Home"

Dear Sister:

We enjoyed seeing "In the Heart of the Home" picture in the MESSAGE. Also the article which went with the picture.

You can readily see that it is a Christian's home. It has no resemblance to most worldly homes, with TV's, ash trays, magazines, etc., that clutter. It is the same with our lives as with our homes. As Christians, our lives must be clean and orderly, uncluttered with the thoughts and ways of the world.

Saint Paul, in I Cor. 14:40, says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." That includes our homes, our lives, everything.

Lozano, Texas

J. D.

## Making Pearls

Dear Friend:

Our lesson this morning was on "Pearls." It takes hard rubs, trials and temptations, in this life, to make us into the precious stone or jewel with which God purposes to fill the space in the beautiful City of Zion.

Kindness in ourselves is the ingredient that coats the blows that unkindness or unjustified criticism may bring upon us, but if we cover these evils with love, joy, peace, etc., it will be meat to help us grow.

We do not want to let our surroundings hinder our growing. We want to let this truth become so embedded within this shell of ours that that is all that our minds can think. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Hartsville, S. C.

V. S.

## "Life's Daily Surrender"

Dear Friends:

I am thankful that I found the truth through the Megiddo Mission. I am thankful for this life in which we have been given time to surrender to Him in all things, as expressed in the following verses by H. R. Smith.

### "SURRENDER"

Life is a daily surrender,  
An oblation to infinite love,  
Of our time, our talents, and treasure,  
For use of the Father above.

Life is a daily surrender,  
A yielding of heart, mind and will,  
To the guidance He offers so freely,  
That His purposes we may fulfill.

Life is a daily surrender,  
Of all that we are or would be.  
No least chamber concealing,  
From Father's all-wise scrutiny.

Life is a daily surrender,  
And discipline often severe;  
Yet through prayer we are given new power  
And courage to still persevere.

Brunswick, Maine

M. L.

## "I Will Go to the King"

**W**HOLESALE massacre is threatened. Imperiled are the lives of all the Jews throughout the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire. In fact, all Israel is to be exterminated on a set day by a universal slaughter, for the decree has gone forth, signed with the king's signet.

Why is judgment so rash? The cause is jealousy—the old, old problem of humankind. Haman the Amalekite has been elevated to the position of Prime Minister of King Ahasuerus. By royal commandment all the king's servants must bow down and do obeisance to him. Mordecai refused. (It was his only possible course, because no Jew can offer any act of obeisance to any Amalekite without reproach of conscience.) Haman was incensed. He hated Mordecai and plotted to get even. Whenever he had a private audience with the king he poured poisonous thoughts into his ears. Was there not national danger in permitting a certain race of people to persist in the practice of their own customs and laws, in open defiance of His Majesty's government? For such disloyalty Haman placidly suggested their extermination. The Jews had considerable wealth, and that would all be forfeit to the crown. Ahasuerus was persuaded.

Thus it is that letters bearing the royal seal and setting a date for the massacre of all Jews have been sent to every province of the empire. No one, high or low, is to be spared.

Is there no intercessor? Must a race perish by the beastly passions of a single man, powerful though he may be? No! Not while Mordecai lives and exerts influence over his foster-daughter, Esther. She, favorite of the king and recently selected for the queenship, shall be the savior of her people. Mordecai who was one of the Jews of the dispersion, had brought up the orphaned Esther, his sister's daughter. Educated as a daughter in the house of Mordecai, a wise and devout Israelite, she had probably learned from him the glorious truths about God treasured by her people. From her infancy, devout Jewess that she was, she undoubtedly had bowed her knee to Jehovah. And now Esther had taken the deposed Vashti's place as queen. In this rich Persian kingdom she is in touch with a power not counted in terms of marble or gold or silver.

Now, in reaction to the king's decree, Mordecai demonstrates his grief by rending his garments and putting on sackcloth and ashes and wailing at the entrance of the king's gate. This is intended as a signal to Esther. The news reaches her and the queen is deeply distressed. Immediately she dispatches garments to clothe Mordecai, but he refuses to accept them. Whereupon a messenger is sent to ascertain the cause of Mordecai's grief. Mordecai replies with a copy of the written decree for the Jews' destruction, and a personal charge for Esther to go to the king and make supplication for her people. The queen falters, saying,

"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the

king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law; all alike are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter that he may live. And I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

They told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to return answer to Esther,

"Think not that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther rallied to the summons, ordered a three-day fast in her behalf. Then in her immortal words she said, "I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

The historic details of how Esther went before the king; how the king and Haman attended her banquet; how Haman was elated and how at his house he had gallows, fifty cubits high, built with the intent of hanging Mordecai; how the king purposed to reward Mordecai and how Haman suggested to the king what should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor and how Haman, mortified, was ordered to carry out these suggestions in honoring Mordecai; how Haman was exposed before the king by Esther and how he was hanged upon the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; these things are told in the restrained and dignified language of the sacred writer. ("He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back upon him who starts it rolling.")

And furthermore, how Mordecai was honored and exalted before the king; how Esther's petitions were granted and how her people defended themselves on the day on which they were to have been massacred, this too, and more, the sacred writer relates as only he could tell it. Only, let us note well the sacred writer's point in all this, that the Divine Hand was all the time overruling Ahasuerus' and Haman's brutality, Esther's beauty and elevation to the vacant seat, all this and more, to work together for the deliverance and well-being of the dispersed remnant of Israel.

. . . . .

"Ancient history," some will say. Others—more critically—"It scarcely deserves space in the Book." Let us reflect thoughtfully. Perhaps this epoch-making history has not had the consideration it deserves. Perhaps the value of this book has been overlooked. Perhaps we have missed the moral lesson which may be aimed at us direct as a shot of a gun. Let us scrutinize the case thoroughly.

A timeless picture is presented in the appearance of Esther before the king, an age-old drama enacted. Throughout recorded history hundreds of Esthers have risked their lives to intercede, perchance for some lone



and oppressed individual or for a downtrodden nation. The Israelites owe their release from Egypt to Moses. Protestantism today traces its birth to that far-off time when Luther—nauseated with the injustices of Catholicism—attached his 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. (He was a man outside God's plan, yet a vital link in the progress of that plan.)

The book of Esther teaches us primarily the tremendous demands which are made upon a person who renders service to others. It teaches the well-nigh overwhelming peril to which a person must expose himself to succor and save another. Basically, it teaches that service demands sacrifice.

Look at Esther. She had jetted from bottom to top of the social scale in Persia, from orphan in an exiled race to queen of the greatest nation on earth.

When the emergency arose, Mordecai did not mince words. "If you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish."

Who of us can know the ten thousand thoughts which fevered her brain, and the warring emotions which heaved her breast! There were personal considerations larger than we have ever known. Prestige was at stake—and more—life itself hung in the balance for Esther. But personal considerations were banished in face of public necessity.

Here is qualification number one for a public servant, a savior or deliverer of others. And here, let us state, the would-be aspirants for the Esther role narrow down appreciably. Few are the people who will sacrifice personal interest for public good. In this capacity Esther, true to her name, is a brilliant "star" of Bible history.

If Esther had not risen to the occasion, what then? *Relief and deliverance would have arisen from another quarter.* Know this: When your opportunity comes to deliver a nation from galling servitude or an individual from the thralldom of confusion or the throes of passion, if you fail, deliverance will be brought by the hand of another, for God's purposes cannot be thwarted.

Esther grasped her opportunity when she recognized it. But we are not great queens like Esther, nor world statesmen with the deliverance of nations in our hands. We are what we are, and the work God has assigned us is before us. We all have our own circles to operate in, and within our own circles opportunities continually arise. Our opportunities may not be as far-reaching and high-sounding as other men's but they are *our* opportunities and they are far-reaching enough for us. Our opportunities are life or death to us and others, they are salvation or condemnation to those within our influence. Is that not circle and opportunity enough? We are tempted every day to say: If only I were Esther! If only I had a great opportunity! I would rise to it! I would speak out at any risk, I would do the work, win a name, deliver Israel, glorify God!

Open your eyes and you will see dazzling all around you your endless opportunities! Your most commonplace, monotonous, uninteresting, and most every-day circle so shines, if only you see it—opportunities to improve yourself and assist your fellows!

And now for a moment let us observe Esther in action. The fast is accomplished. She dons her royal robes and makes her appearance in the king's presence. Poise and

self-possession are apparent in her every move and gesture. The king holds out the golden scepter. Her heart leaps within her. At that moment she knows that the prayers of her comrades have reached heaven. That gesture is to her the divine assurance that the fast availed, that God is working through her.

"What is it, Queen Esther?" the king asks. "What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."

Restraining the words nearest her heart, Esther replied simply, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come this day to a dinner that I have prepared for the king."

Esther knew the wisdom of calm, measured advances toward a set goal, and the folly of hasty, rash, impetuous action. Here is self-possession unexcelled and unrivaled in history. Many a reformer's blood has boiled at a threatened injustice, his eyes have flamed fire, and his tongue has lashed the unjust movement which he opposes, only to betray his own immaturity and consequent inadequacy to right the wrong which he recognizes.

Self-control is first, middle and last in influencing people. Oftentimes blind force accomplishes nothing, only perhaps damage. Gentleness is a great reformer.

Another consideration. If we seek to save or restore an individual or a nation, know this: We cannot be cold and lifeless. We must be warm, animate. We must feel the pain and the anguish of their affliction—be it mental or physical—as keenly as though it were in our own body (see Heb. 13:1, 3). We can never serve our brother adequately until we have an acute awareness of his need.

Further, the case of Esther holds this thought: Esther's calm collectedness at the crucial point of her career was not the product of the moment, or of the three-day fast. It was the result of years of careful training under Mordecai. Furthermore, however pleasant their situation in Persia, we may be certain that all the exiled Jews who were among the pious loyalists to the Homeland knew suffering. Their dispersion itself was a constant reminder of their disobedience. With us, only when we have known suffering are we in a position to offer relief to the afflicted. As Paul has it:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."

In short, *before* you go before the king, you must be yourself a moral giant by means of much tribulation.

And whenever the summons comes to you to deliver an individual or a nation, be an Esther: Go before the king.

Thus shall the Almighty King hear your soul's petition. As in Queen Esther's drama, just Mordecai was spared and exalted while wicked Haman was debased and hanged; so with all the wicked: they shall one day be no more, for God shall deliver His people, spiritual Israel. They shall be vindicated, and all the world shall know and see His greatness and His glory.

# The Great Apostasy

## —or Departure from True Religion—

**Apostasy:** *an abandonment of what one has voluntarily professed; a total desertion or departure from one's faith, principles, or party.* —WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY.

**Apostasy:** *a term generally employed to describe a complete renunciation of the Christian faith, or even an exchange of one form of it for another, especially if the motive be unworthy. In the first centuries of the Christian era, apostasy was most commonly induced by persecution, and was indicated by some outward act, such as offering incense to a heathen deity or blaspheming the name of Christ.* —ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA.

### INTRODUCTION

Among the major and most far-reaching prophecies of the Sacred Volume are those which describe a total apostasy or departure from true religion, the consequences of apostasy, and God Almighty's ultimate reckoning with and destruction of the apostate power.

For many centuries God had a living, working people who were faithfully ministered unto by patriarchs, prophets, Jesus Himself, and His apostles. But the way of salvation is ever narrow, rugged, difficult, and the time came when the people of God wearied of the way, and accepted another way which was less in conflict with their natural inclinations. Following the trend of human desire, they so modified divine law, they so enlarged and re-surfaced the narrow way to life that it became the broad way to destruction. The narrow way to salvation was lost, for none chose to walk therein. It became the darkest epoch in human history.

The darkness, however, was destined to give place to dawn. The end of the Apostasy is as clearly defined on the Sacred Page as is its beginning. As the Apostasy was introduced by "the man of sin" to whom light and truth were abhorrent, so it was terminated by a man of God whose highest veneration was for the truth of God's Word and whose most ardent desire was to walk in the light of that truth.

We purpose to present these facts in series form in succeeding issues of the MEGIDDO MESSAGE.

## Religion Today

RELIGIOUS revivals through the years have brought millions of people into the church. But the momentous question arises, Have they been brought to God? Does the Word of God actually form the foundation for men's faith today?

Perhaps an investigation of this question will form the clearest approach to our subject. If we find the voice of the pulpit to be the Voice of God, then there has been no apostasy or departure from true religion. If, on the other hand, we find the popular creeds of the day to be at variance with the Word of God, then we can know that sometime in the past—sometime after Jesus walked and taught among men, sometime after His apostles established the early Christian Church—human thought was allowed to supplant divine thought.

We approach the subject with a broad and open mind, intent only upon arriving at facts, evidence, truth.

Today men proclaim a triune godhead—God the Fa-

ther, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; while Jesus and His apostles spoke of "one God . . . who is above all" (Eph. 4: 6).

According to theology, man possesses an immortal soul which survives the death of the body; according to God's Word, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 20).

According to theology, a literal devil is the source of temptation; according to the Book, "man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust" (James 1: 14).

In the light of God's Word the burning hell of orthodoxy becomes nothing more terrifying than the grave. "The wages of sin is death"; "broad is the way that leadeth to destruction"—not eternal torment (Rom. 6: 23; Matt. 7: 13).

According to theology, heaven is the future abode of the righteous; according to Christ, they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5: 5).

And how is this righteousness secured? Man teaches that Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary purchases our salvation; but the Book says, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2: 12).

Thousands claim to be saved now; but Jesus says, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10: 22), showing that salvation is the reward to be bestowed at the end of the race.

Deathbed repentance—a cherished doctrine of Christendom—collapses before the prophet's solemn charge: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains. . . . Then," if the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots, "may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13: 16, 23).

Whether we like to admit it or not, apostasy is apparent in every doctrine that has been examined. The teachings of Jesus of Nazareth have been obscured and nearly obliterated. Human thought has been substituted for divine thought. A sad situation!

Yet it is heartening to learn that this very condition was foreseen by the Almighty centuries ago, and foretold by many of His inspired spokesmen. This study of *The Great Apostasy*, as first the subject of prophecy, next of history, and lastly of our own observation, should serve to inspire faith in the Being who knows the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.

### APOSTASY PROPHESED

The prophetic visions recorded in the second, seventh and eighth chapters of Daniel span the centuries from the days of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to the Judgment at Christ's return, forecasting with superhuman accuracy



the rise and fall of the great empires of antiquity—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—all to be destroyed

and supplanted by the eternal empire of Jesus Christ. But before the final scene, the prophet's vision included a strange and dismaying interlude. Out of the declining Roman

Empire was to arise a sinister power, a "little horn," which should wage a war of extermination against the saints of the Most High, prevailing against them until the truth was cast down to the ground, there to remain for a definite and revealed length of time.

The work of this "little horn" is described in some detail by the angel to whom Daniel appealed for an interpretation of the vision.

The little horn would make war with the saints, and prevail against them.

It would speak great words against the Most High.

It would wear out the saints of the Most High.

It would change times and laws (Daniel 7: 21, 25).

It would cast down to the ground some of the stars\* of heaven.

It would take away the daily sacrifice.†

It would beat down true religion (Moffatt).

It would practice and prosper (Dan. 8: 10—12).

In the light of these plain statements by the angel to Daniel we can know that some 2,500 years ago the people of God were made acquainted with an oncoming Apostasy, a time when true religion would perish from the earth for want of a single supporter.

Daniel foresaw the Apostasy through the mists of many years. When Jesus walked and taught among men, that horrible epoch was some five hundred years nearer.

He referred to it frequently. Take for instance, the familiar Parable of the Ten Virgins. The ten virgins were a select group who aspired to be members of Christ's bride when His future Kingdom fills the world. Every virgin was equipped with a lamp, the means of radiating light. A portion of the group identified themselves as "wise" by keeping their lamps burning, which is to let the light of true religion shine out in one's daily life and conduct.

Thus far the Parable is simply a reiteration of common knowledge. Always the tares are present among the wheat, the goats among the sheep; and so in this illustration, there are foolish, inactive virgins among the wise. This portion of the Parable is simple groundwork for the real message which follows:

"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept" (Matt. 25: 5).

A time would come—during the Bridegroom's absence—when wise and foolish virgins alike would lapse into a state of slumber. Furthermore, Jesus' words presage an Apostasy which would be *total*: "All" (no exceptions!) would slumber and sleep. Sleep is a state in which one is totally oblivious to what is going on about him; he knows absolutely nothing; he cannot reason, make decisions, or act upon decisions made; he is powerless to accomplish anything. And "sleep" is the very figure which Jesus em-

ployed to illustrate the condition of the true Church during His long absence.

Among the religious systems who give partial credence to the idea of a general apostasy, most are inclined to ignore the divine forecast that this apostasy should be total, that *all* would slumber and sleep, claiming that during the entire period of the Medieval Ages God had living witnesses upon earth. But Jesus' forecast in Matthew 25 allows no such assumption.

Christ had ascended to heaven. Many of the brethren erred in believing His second advent to be at hand in that age. They seemed reluctant to grasp the idea from Daniel and Jesus that an Apostasy must come first. It seemed to have been with the object of emphasizing this fact that Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, from which we quote:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2: 1—4).

Weymouth's Translation is equally explicit. He says that Christ's second advent "cannot come unless the apostasy comes first." Note carefully: the prime instrument of the Apostasy should be "the man of sin" possessed of such presumption as to assume divine authority. Egotism is man's most unbecoming characteristic and perhaps the most inexcusable in view of human frailty and blundering. Egotism grown to such gigantic proportions that man would exalt himself above God, sit in the temple of God, and show himself to be God might seem incredible from the viewpoint of the age in which the prophecy was given. But presently we shall observe this identical situation from a historical aspect.

A "falling away" from the truth was inevitable, because the people of God would tire of resisting the powers of darkness. Nor did this falling away belong to dim, distant future ages which could not affect the existing Church, for Paul said,

"The mystery of iniquity doth already work" (verse 7).

Paul's second mention of the Apostasy was in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, . . .

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 28—30).

This would indicate the cause of the Apostasy to be two-fold: Grievous wolves would invade the flock and introduce corrupting influences. But more serious than that, members of the church would turn apostate, give voice to their heretical views, and secure a following.

(Continued on page 9)

\* "Stars" signify "faithful ones." In Dan. 12: 3 the righteous are compared to stars; Jesus is "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22: 16).

† "Daily sacrifice" signifies the daily death to sin or crucifixion of unholy thought and desire. See Romans 12: 1; 6: 6—13.

## Sifting Days

IN THE Upper Room on that fateful night Jesus had met with His twelve disciples to partake of what proved to be their last Passover Supper together. It was a solemn occasion and Jesus tried to convey to the bewildered minds of His apostles many deep truths. Throughout the evening, apprehension and a puzzling tenseness must have enveloped them; a foreboding of ill which they could not comprehend. They did not understand, but Jesus understood. He knew only too well what shortly awaited Him, and them also. And thus it was that He spoke these words, sorrowfully and in warning: "Simon, Simon, Satan has claimed the right to sift you all like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail" (Luke 22: 31, 32, Moffatt).

No one knew their weaknesses so well as Jesus, and no one could have the same measure of tender sympathy for them. He had heard their clamorings for prominent positions in the coming Kingdom. He saw the blindness of their hearts to the things that really mattered in life. Jesus was not deceived by appearances, however attractive or appealing.

That evening there was no time nor was it a place for plain and lengthy explanations. A drama was about to be enacted and the Master spoke of it in symbolic language. He made a broad statement packed into a nutshell. He had put a tragic fact into a veiled presentation: They were to be sifted like wheat. Satan was to test them sorely and that, very soon. In the days that closely followed—dire, sifting days—they remembered and recalled much that Jesus had said.

Who was the Satan in this case? It was none other than Peter's and the others' own weaknesses. True enough, there would be some fear of the Jewish authorities but that would be trivial. The big test would come when they saw Jesus taken and condemned to die, when all the time they expected Him to set up His Kingdom at that time and they would be His chief co-rulers. Would their faith stand the test, that somehow God's will was being done, though at present they could not understand? Because of their slowness of heart to perceive, would they now in this hour of crisis be able to readjust their ideas to His? Each would have a terrific conflict in his mind to resolve these problems.

Since Peter was generally the spokesman for the little group, Jesus had directed those words to him, but in reality, he had included them *all*. Their faith was soon to be shaken violently, and thus the warning of the coming ordeal. The startling events and circumstances that culminated in the crucifixion of the Son of God constituted the great sieve.

It was a mighty sifting and convulsive shaking, and we are well acquainted with the results. Jesus our example triumphed in this crowning act of obedience which finished His work. He rose to the heights of spirituality, and in so doing, became our perfect Pattern. His humble followers, frustrated by doubts and fears, suffered much in the shaking and jarring of their faith but also tri-



umphed in the end. Only one, Judas, failed to face the conflict with a struggle to survive, and so sank down through the meshes of events into perdition.

Sifting time is a testing to determine the survival of the fittest. No one would, for the mere pleasure of it, choose for himself the shaking, the rousing and the awakening that goes with the sifting but he endures it for the opportunity it gives to free himself from the chaff, from all that is useless, low and groveling. Each time we find ourselves in the sieve of circumstances, be it a trial or temptation, there is a chance to rise to greater heights in spirituality, for trials and temptations are absolute necessities in the development of real life. Every day of a Christian's life is filled with momentary siftings, separating and perfecting. Our desires are the determining factors. The force of our desires will lift us upward toward God or drag us downward to the level of dust, chaff and refuse.

The life that yields itself in submission to this sifting process will be sifted to perfection as grain is sifted in a sieve, as the precious is separated from the vile and the chaff is eliminated from the wheat. The process may be very perplexing and is often extremely painful, but it is the only way by which those tempers, habits, and dispositions, which are out of harmony with the life and love of God, can be removed, subdued, or corrected.

What is the chaff to the wheat? Nothing. Those who are the wheat are aiming for higher levels, above the chaff of carnality. No matter how severe or stern the disciplining, only the chaff will be sifted out. Not the least grain will fall upon the earth—not a kernel will be lost. Satan cannot pluck them from the Almighty's hand.

Many are the times we have found ourselves in the sieve of circumstances, nor did it take a great tragedy to shake us. Siftings often have small beginnings. Some vain imagination will start a struggle that is hard to control. That spark of bitterness that has smoldered for many years, how quickly it can assert itself if given half a chance. Someone makes a pointed remark; of course, it can be taken two ways and human nature tends to take it the wrong way, and so the sieve shakes. If not stopped immediately, the thought takes on great proportions and so the struggle is on. Every shake of the sieve is a chance



to elbow ourselves a notch higher above petty trivialities. With each battle for what is right we can rise upward, inch by inch and notch by notch.

It takes a mighty struggle to rise above the downward pull of our carnal nature. Those who are only moderately struggling will never reach the levels of perfection. Working only half-heartedly, they soon drop down to a level of vague neutrality, neither positive nor negative. Their spirituality is lean, narrow and stunted. They have not the height nor depth of character to hold them up in the fray. They lack that fighting spirit. They may say they want perfection, but when their convictions are tested and conformities shaken, they are not ready for the test. Time and time again, when circumstances would polish up their character they shrink back, thinking another time will be more convenient; another time they can "take it." Each delay takes them downward to lower levels. Without realizing it they are slipping and one day they will lose their already precarious foothold, slip through the meshes and out of the race for eternal life.

Then there are some whose intentions are good. They can be the medium or instrument to sift others but have not the caliber to face it themselves. They can help others to deal with the tensions of worry or discouragement but fail miserably when the sifting comes close home. We find this class spoken of in Job 4: 3-5 (Moffatt): "You have yourself set many right, and put strength into feeble souls; your words have kept men on their feet, the weak-kneed you have nerved. But now that your own turn has come, you droop; it touches you close, and you collapse." That is why there are not many who rise to the top and stay on top.

There is no compromising with evil on top, where the struggle is the greatest and the sifting is the fiercest. It takes "fight" to reach the top. But amidst the bangs and bruises and jolts of life, no matter how hard the sifting is, a few hold on. In fighting, they rise "head and shoulders" above the indifferent, the indolent and the careless. They show to a dying world that they are "resisting unto blood" and are championing a great cause.

And so all day long, the sieve shakes and the battle for perfection goes on. Satan—sin, and man's evil desires—is present but so is the angel of the Lord, encamping about and ministering to those who keep on in the struggle, rising above themselves. And when we become unmovable and established on godly elevations, where nothing can stir our peaceful serenity in Christ Jesus, the circumstantial shakings will no longer affect us. Satan will have no influence over us. He will consider us poor siftings, too big for him to handle. But unto God we shall be elect and precious, the finest wheat worthy to be gathered into His granary.

Undoubtedly it was comforting to the apostles to know Jesus prayed for them and was concerned about their welfare, and to us, it is both thrilling and encouraging to hear someone say, "I am praying for you." The assurance that they are the object of our prayers is a fine contribution to the well-being of those in trouble. But more wonderful still is the fact that Christ said, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." If we are doing on our part, in that statement is the glorious assurance that the ultimate outcome of all life's testings will be complete deliverance from all that perplexes and pains us now.

## CUT TO SHINE

**I**N THE dim unrecorded past, ages before the advent of man on this little sphere, the mighty forces of nature were at work. Tremendous upheavals and pressures combined with intense heat and cold created rugged mountain ranges and the restless seas. During this period pure carbon, deep within these primeval volcanoes, fused by the intense heat and pressure produced a stone unsurpassed by any known substance for hardness.

The value of the diamond for ornamental purposes lies in its ability to reflect light. A diamond in its natural state does not shine, but appears as a dull piece of glass. To be of use it must be worked upon by skilled craftsmen who cut off portions around the stone making what are known as facets. When these have been ground and polished a brilliant glittering gem results.

Amid the stresses and pressures of daily living and the heat of trials God is trying to make of us precious stones for His temple. Though we were only diamonds in the rough when He called us yet there were within us qualities that with careful chipping and polishing would produce gems of worth.

Of the different forms in which diamonds are cut, the brilliant is the favorite. It requires, when perfect, fifty-eight facets. As our heavenly Father wants only the best of jewels to adorn His temple we must become a brilliant gem. To be perfect we must have cut and polished upon our character at least nine principal facets, known as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. To produce these facets from which will be reflected the image of our Master much undesirable and useless material must be removed. This calls for the chipping process under the hammer of God's Word. Some portions will need only a light stroke of the hammer, while others that contain anger, pride, foolishness and bitterness may require many severe blows to cleave them asunder.

As only skilled artisans are employed in the cutting of diamonds, men who know where and how hard a blow to strike, so we have working upon us one who knows the end from the beginning—a Being of unbounded mercy and wisdom who does not chasten us for His pleasure but for our "profit that we might be partakers of his holiness." At times we may question the necessity of so many blows, and try to dodge out of the way of the hammer, but by so doing we only prolong the task and may waste so much time that we will fail to become perfect stones to glow and shine in the Master's crown, hence, will be a reject, useful only as an industrial diamond.

In the field of industry today small or imperfect stones are used as an abrasive for grinding wheels which must stand up under extremely rigorous use. So the Lord, at His coming, will make use of these imperfect stones as an abrasive to wear away the kingdoms and power of men and all who resist His rightful claim as King, that He may make room for His Kingdom of peace and righteousness.

A perfect gem reflects light that shines upon it and glows as though it were lighted within by a bluish flame. This is God's purpose in the chipping and polishing process upon us. He wants us to shine, for our Master tells us: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see



your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The nearer we become as a perfect stone the more we will shine. Beside reflecting light our life will be lighted by an inner light that will glow and glitter wherever we may be. Though Paul and Silas were in a dark prison with their feet fast in the stocks, yet this inner light brightened even a Roman prison where they sang praises to God at midnight.

When the chipping and polishing are complete and we shine, reflecting the image of our Master in word and deed, we then will be worthy of being partakers of the physical light such as shone from Moses' face when he came down from Mount Sinai where he spent forty days in the presence of the angel, or the light of Jesus' glorified body which struck Paul blind on his way to Damascus. This is the ultimate reward of those who will endure the cutting for one short day and prove worthy of shining as the stars forever in the Kingdom of God on earth made new.

### THE GREAT APOSTASY

(Continued from page 6)

Again Paul referred to the Apostasy in his second Letter to Timothy which was written from Rome when Paul was in the shadow of the executioner's sword. It was his final plea to his beloved son to be steadfast in the faith.

"All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived.

"The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths" (II Tim. 3: 13, 14; 3: 3, 4, R.S.V.).

This is explicit. The influence of evil men would be sown broadcast until myths, man-made fictions, would hold more attraction than God's Word. Weymouth's translation renders it:

"A time is coming when men will not tolerate wholesome instruction, but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will find a multitude of teachers to satisfy their own fancies, and will close their ears to the truth and will turn away to fables."

### NEXT ISSUE:

#### THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM TRUTH TO ERROR

Life is a short day, but it is a working day.

He who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dare not is a slave.

Manual labor is a moral safeguard, a protection against sin. Work calms the passions, occupies the mind, and does not leave it time to think of evil.

"No one can take less pains than to hold his tongue. Hear much, and speak little; for the tongue is the instrument of the greatest good and the greatest evil done in the world."

## Musings of the Editor

THERE is one thing positive and sure, and that is that the way out of the Wilderness is not back to Egypt and its savory flesh pots. Hardships have made strong characters; flesh pots have been the wreck of many so-called mighty nations. The battle against the hardships of life has always been the producer of heroism. Out of the most limited privileges have been developed some of the greatest of the race.

### Beyond the Wilderness— How?

If I cannot help another to get on toward the Promised Land by a tugging pull, God grant at least that I shall not cause any soul to hesitate because I stand in the way. Let us go up and take the land, no matter how large the giants, for God is with us for our Captain and His priests with sounding trumpets. Our service should be full of rejoicing. Why do we persist in climbing on the dark side of the mountain and there amid the shades keep stumbling over ugly roots that trip us up, when the sun is shining so brightly on the other side and there we can see our path so clearly!

We sing, "Only to be what He wants me to be," but we have not been pliable enough. The hands of the Potter have ever been ready to mold us into the divine image, but our substance remains too hard, hence He is helpless to carry on. Why should we keep clinging to the present transient things of life when the eternal lies before us? What has the world to offer? How dark the scenes that beset us on every hand! Ill health pushes its gaunt way into the place long held by health; mistrust displaces confidence where friendships have failed; sin enters brazenly to insult holiness; and death makes its intrusive entrance across the thresholds of our fondest affection. Hence the necessity of a strong faith to carry us over every trial of life, even the faith of a Job who had that sweet confidence and consolation, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." It is then that a strong and quiet peace settles over the soul and a better and happier song comes floating out of life, knowing the Everlasting Arms enfold us, and that one glorious day even death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Lord, let me not be too content  
With life in trifling service spent—  
Make me aspire!  
When days with petty cares are filled  
Let me with fleeting thoughts be thrilled  
Of something higher.

Help me to long for mental grace,  
To struggle with the commonplace  
I daily find.  
May little deeds not bring to fruit  
A crop of little thought to suit  
A shriveled mind.

—Selected.

# Meditations

## On the Word

*"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 107: 1, 2).*

This exhortation is to tell—not what we are or what we have done—but to tell what God has done; and not alone what He has done for us physically, mentally or socially, though all of these are worthy of sacred praise, but what He has done for us spiritually. He has redeemed us. And from what has He redeemed us? He has redeemed us from error and superstition, from the fables and traditions of men, from hopelessness and aimless striving. When God's saving knowledge found us we were without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world! We were living our lives in any manner that appealed to us, unsure of where we were going, or if our direction of travel showed signs of any definite goal. If we have been redeemed, let us "say so."

The Psalmist was aware of his redemption from the thralldom of sin, and the slavery to his own evil propensities when he said: "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (Ps. 116: 8). And the Lord, speaking through the Prophet Hosea, projects the final and more important phase of this redemption: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction" (13: 14).

FIRST: This duty to "say so" we owe to ourselves. No true man is willing to compromise with himself, he is ready for the world to know where he stands. If one takes a position, he wants it to be known why he takes that position. Paul stated it eloquently when he said: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." And again: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (Rom. 1: 16; II Tim. 1: 12). Paul's hope was so real, so vital, so dynamic, that it went with him wherever he went.

SECOND: This duty of letting others know that we are redeemed we also owe to others. The secret disciple wins few followers for his Master. If truth has brought blessings to our own life it is our duty to say so. Like the case of the insane man whom Jesus healed in the country of the Gadarenes. As Jesus was taking ship to pass over the lake again the healed man wanted to accompany him, but Jesus said to him: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them the great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5: 19). On that first Easter morning the angel said to the women at the sepulcher after Jesus' resurrection, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead" (Matt. 28: 6, 7). And again Jesus Himself, meeting the women, said: "go, tell" the disciples that I am risen from the dead.

In the famine at Samaria during the days of Jotham, the Syrians were camped ready for an invasion. Four

near-starved Israelite lepers fell to the enemy camp in hope of obtaining food. The Lord, in fighting for Israel, had caused the Syrians to flee, leaving their camp intact, with supplies and much provisions. Upon making this discovery the lepers began eating their fill. One said to the other, "Go spread the good news lest by daybreak some evil overtake us." God had been good, now it was for them to say so. God has been good to us, let us say so.

THIRD: This duty of letting men know that we have been redeemed we owe above all else to God. We owe it to Him as a matter of gratitude. He has done "great things for us, whereof we are glad," and for which we should show much appreciation. The one best way in which we can show appreciation is by recognizing His authority. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We owe it to Him as a matter of rejoicing. If ever we are saved all the honor and all the praise of our salvation belong to Him. And we owe it to him as a matter of obedience. He commands, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

We that are redeemed should say so in word, both written and spoken. Many souls have been won for Christ by a written appeal. If we correspond with a friend, do not fail to tell the good news of how we can be redeemed from eternal death. And we should say so with spoken word, both in personal profession as we publicly own Jesus as our great King and Example and also by personal testimony. Like Andrew, let us go and find others and bring them into the Christian way of life. This saving knowledge is a treasure, why then should we value it so lightly that we would be reluctant to speak about it, or be ashamed of it!

And above all we should say so by our works. Not alone by the words of our lips but also by the works of our lives. Here, too, "actions speak louder than words." The gospel lived is much more powerful than the gospel preached. Jesus was too practical to be satisfied with mere profession. He demanded action on the part of His followers. He forced home His point with the simile of the fruit-bearing trees. Good trees bring forth good fruit; bad trees, bad fruit. Hence bad fruit comes from a bad tree, good fruit from a good tree. Nothing can be more definite, no fact can be more obvious. Jesus riveted this truth when He said: "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them."

And we should "say so" before our loved ones in the home. A religion that doesn't begin at home is not worthy of the term. If a man doesn't love his brother whom he has seen how can he love God whom he has not seen? And we should "say so" before our associates in business by maintaining the highest standard of honesty in all our dealings. And we should "say so" before the world of unbelievers. The command is: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." If God's saving knowledge has not redeemed us to the extent that our life will show it, His grace has come to us in vain.

We should say that we have been redeemed even in the presence of trials and disappointments. "The man worth while is the man who can smile, when everything goes dead wrong," runs the familiar verse. And certainly no system of ethics, nor application of the most advanced principles of psychology, could bring more fruitful results in this field than the practical advice of God's new and living way.

# Your Questions Answered



## BIBLICAL PERSONAL CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

**In reading the first five books of the Bible, how does one distinguish the Mosaic Law from the Everlasting Covenant?**

The Mosaic Law begins in the Book of Exodus. The Law in full was given on Mount Sinai, but certain features—the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the sabbath—were introduced in advance, upon their departure from Egypt. It may be said with safety that all the laws and commandments between Exodus 12 and Deut. 27 are of the Mosaic code. The closing chapters of Deuteronomy are poetical and deeply spiritual.

The Mosaic code was a national instrument, a body of civil and criminal laws based upon the ethical principles of the Everlasting Covenant, or Law of Faith, by which the patriarchs lived and to which the law of Moses was added (Gal. 3: 19). It was adapted to the times and culture and circumstances of the people for whom it was intended; it was a good law, a civilizing influence, but it could never give eternal life (Heb. 7: 19), any more than the keeping of our present civil laws could save us. The Everlasting Covenant was in force from the beginning, and by it men worked out their salvation, both before and after Sinai.

As St. Paul says (Rom. 15: 4), "The things which were written aforetime were written for our learning": and we may learn many valuable lessons of God's ways with men by the reading of these Scriptures.

**Is the soul immortal?**

Contrary to the belief of many, the soul is identical with the body. Man does not possess a soul, he is a soul. Peter tells us that there were eight souls or persons saved in the ark (I Pet. 3: 8; II Pet. 2: 5). Ezekiel, speaking of the workers of iniquity, says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 4, 20). So it is not immortal. The Prophet Job confirms this in his direct statement in reference to "mortal man" (Job 4: 17). If by nature we possessed an immortal soul, Paul's challenge to "seek for immortality" (Rom. 2: 7) would be without force, as would his statement in I Cor. 15: 53, 54, that "this mortal must put on immortality."

**Please explain Zechariah 5: 3, 4. Who is the wicked woman of this chapter?**

The "flying roll" of verses 3 and 4 is the law of God which, in the vision, is spreading over the earth after Christ's coming to suppress all evil. The woman described in the remainder of the chapter is named in v. 8 as "wickedness." When the flying roll goes forth with power, the devil—all sin—will be confined in the "bottomless pit," or the heart of man (Rev. 20: 1—3) by that stern, unbreakable law. No overt evil will be tolerated, and when the Kingdom of God is complete, where once great Babylon ruled supreme in "the land of Shinar," the truth will be firmly established on its own base (v. 11).

**If we are striving to do the Lord's will, how will we know if we are doing everything perfectly?**

If we are determined to reach perfection, God promises that our shortcomings will be revealed and we shall have opportunity to correct them (Phil. 3: 15; I Tim. 4: 8). This is accomplished by various means. We do not

visibly see angels today to say, "You shall" or "You shall not," but, nevertheless, we still have the promise that they are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1: 14). If we are sincerely striving, they can cause impressions to be made on the mind, revealing our duty to God or where we are lacking. By comparing our life with the written Word of God we can see where we are deficient (Ps. 119: 109) and will have a heartfelt conviction of sin. Not the least of these helps is reproof of instruction which lightens the way of life (Prov. 6: 23).

**If Elijah went to one of the heavens, kindly explain II Chron. 21: 12—15. Wasn't this message received approximately 10 years after Elijah was taken to another location by the whirlwind?**

It is true that Elijah had been gone from earth at least nine years when this letter was delivered. It would not have been at all impossible for the prophet to foretell by divine inspiration both the character and the dreadful end of the wicked King Jehoram, leaving the letter behind to be delivered at the appropriate time.

Still another possibility, and strong probability, is that the letter was written by Elisha, who was living and active at this time. An error in transcription might easily have confused the names.

**Why was "Christ crucified" a stumbling block to the Jews (I Cor. 1: 23)?**

In this passage of Scripture the Apostle Paul was referring to a crucifixion of deeper significance than the literal, the death to sin (Rom. 6: 10; Luke 9: 23). This crucifixion was a stumbling block to the Jews because they were looking for a Messiah to come in regal power, not one who came humble, meek, and lowly, learning obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. 5: 8, 9). He disannulled the Mosaic Law by reinstating the law of faith, the Royal Law, which deals with the thoughts and intents of the heart. Also, this crucifixion was foolishness to the Greeks or Gentiles because they reject the principle of the necessity of dying to sin in order to be saved.

**How is Christ the first born of every creature (Col. 1: 15)?**

He is the firstfruits of them that sleep (I Cor. 15: 20), the first to triumph over death, the only one of this planet who has received the Spirit birth, or gained immortality (I Tim. 6: 13, 16). God and the angels are immortal, but Christ is the first and only one of the earthly family to reach that goal.

**Does Isaiah 24 substantiate the theory that the earth will be desolate during the thousand years?**

No. Isaiah 24 is a vivid picture of the violent shaking of the earth when God's judgments are poured out, until the wicked are scattered and banished from existence. While the judgments of the Lord will destroy two-thirds of the inhabitants, there will be one-third who will submit to God's purifying judgments (Zech. 13: 8, 9). They will be the "few men left" (Isa. 24: 6). This one-third will form the nucleus which will develop into a number no man can number (Rev. 7: 9), till the earth is filled with the glory of God (Num. 14: 21). These will be the start of the new earth (Isa. 65: 17) over which Christ and His co-rulers will reign.



# *I Will Not Doubt*

I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea  
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails;  
I will believe the Hand which never fails,  
From seeming evil worketh good for me.  
And though I weep because those sails are tattered,  
Still will I cry, while my best hopes lie shattered:  
"I trust in Thee."

I will not doubt, though all my prayers return  
Unanswered from the still, white realm above;  
I will believe it is an all-wise love  
Which has refused these things for which I yearn;  
And though at times I cannot keep from grieving,  
Yet the pure ardor of my fixed believing  
Undimmed shall burn.

I will not doubt, though sorrows fall like rain,  
And troubles swarm like bees about a hive.  
I will believe the heights for which I strive  
Are only reached by anguish and by pain;  
And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses;  
I yet shall see through my severest losses  
The greater gain.

I will not doubt. Well anchored is this faith,  
Like some staunch ship, my soul braves every gale;  
So strong its courage that it will not quail  
To breast the mighty unknown sea of death.  
Oh, may I cry, with strong and dauntless spirit,  
"I do not doubt," so listening worlds may hear it,  
With my last breath.

—Selected.



